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121 of material that was least available to those considering nutrition from a practical point of view. Each African Government has its medical, agricultural, and veterinary advisors, but as yet few have appointed departmental experts on the anthropological side.

121 This shortage of anthropological data seemed to the Committee to be serious in view of the number of nutritional surveys 128 of African peoples then being planned.[1] It was therefore suggested that it would be instructive if I wrote a short book describing, in the case of one particular tribe, the different sociological factors which directly determined the food-supply. The book grew after the fashion of its kind. I was obliged to include introductory, historical, and general material that should have been published in a preliminary monograph. The value of the work seemed to me to lie in its comprehensive treatment of the subject and the evidence that could be given from any one area of the variety of different factors, whether economic, political, legal, or religious which actually affected the people's diet. The result is in effect a description of the whole economic life of the tribe. I have therefore tried to include such information of the sociological type as the anthropologist will require for comparative purposes, together with data on different activities, such as cooking and gardening, which are more detailed than usually given in ethnographic monographs but which, I think, will be useful to the specialist on the nutrition side. To venture like this on the border-line between two different sciences, biological and social, is an ungrateful task. What pleases one set of experts displeases the other. But if the book gives a broad idea of the extent and variety of nutritional problems in one African society it will have achieved its aim.

From the theoretical point of view the book is an elaboration, on the basis of my own field material, of an earlier student thesis compiled from written documents, in which I tried to prove that hunger was the chief determinant of human relationships, initially within the family, but later in wider social groups, the village, age-grade, or political state. But the emphasis is rather different. In the first book I described the fundamental urge for food as shaping human institutions, and in the second I have given concrete material to show how the biological facts of appetite and diet are themselves shaped by the particular system of human relationships and traditional activities which are standardized in a social group—

[1] Under the stimulus of the Colonial Office inquiry described on p. 2.

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121 in other words the cultural mechanisms for producing, preparing,
●128 and dividing food.

114 I have gained much since writing the earlier book from recent developments of Professor Malinowski's type of functional analysis of institutions, and in particular his treatment of agriculture in his last book (*Coral Gardens and Their Magic*, 1935). The practical bent of the present work also has led to frequent comparisons between traditional tribal economics and the new products of European industrial organization, and hence to the type of anthropological problem known as 'culture contact' on this side of the Atlantic, and 'acculturation' on the other. On this aspect I also owe much to the stimulus of Malinowski's recent work and to that of many of the Institute Fellows who have tackled similar questions in the field.[1] The American concept of 'culture patterns', with its emphasis on the comparative view-point I have found very stimulating, more especially as outlined recently by R. Linton, R. Benedict, and M. Mead. I cannot accept the criteria used by the last two writers to describe the culture patterns of particular societies, but I hope later to present the main body of my Bemba material in a form which will serve as a basis for comparative work of a rather different type, and in the meantime I have tried in this book to indicate the 'orientation' or 'pattern' of Bemba interests and activities as they affect the consumption or production of food.

122 The expeditions on which this material was collected were financed by several different Foundations, and to these I must tender very grateful thanks. For my first trip (May 1930–July 1931) grants were made by the Board of Bantu Studies of Capetown University, the Rhodes Trustees, and the Percy Sladen Trust. On my second tour (January 1933–July 1934) I had a fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation. To this last body I also owe thanks for assistance in working up my material at the London School of Economics—in particular for the help of Miss Pauline Blackmore, who died tragically of a sudden illness in the middle of the work, and that of Miss Phyllis Kaberry, herself a field-worker with Australian experience, who gave me much expert aid.

In Northern Rhodesia my work would have been quite impossible without the hospitality I was continually given. Miss H. Eastland, the Government native welfare officer at Kasama, let

[1] Cf. *Methods of Study of Culture Contact*, International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, Memo XV, 1938.

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avoid identifying myself with either of the three classes of Europeans referred to, and in some ways it was easier for a woman anthropologist to do so than for a man. I gradually established a role as an inquirer into native customs, with the taking of notes and photographs as my 'work', and many elderly men and women were actually interested in 'teaching' me, but I was always treated as a person in authority however little I tried to exert that power. I was referred to as 'chieftainess' or even 'chief', as are most Government officials, and finally found it best to adopt the speech patterns of the Bemba royal family when addressing commoners, and to accept as much deference as they did. This position of prestige prevented my attaining any real position of equality with the people but was an advantage in carrying out village censuses when it was helpful to be able to exert a certain amount of authority.[1]

To these preliminary statements I should add the fact that I have never lived in a European agricultural community, and it is therefore possible that some of the customs of cultivation which I describe as 'primitive' exist among peasants in this continent. I have had a general biological training but know nothing of medical and agricultural science or of ecology, and was unable at the time to get any practical co-operation from experts in these fields.

To describe a culture the anthropologist has to draw upon notes of personal observations, native texts, and concrete documentation in the form of daily records, plans, and descriptions of individual cases. It has not been possible to get a tenth of this material *into* a book of this size, and much of it cannot be summarized in statistical form. I have therefore given concrete cases here and there as illustrative material only, indicating where I could whether such incidents were common. Where I have used the phrase 'The Bemba say . . .', I mean a statement regularly made in answer to a question, or a formalized utterance in the shape of a proverb or saying. Different points of view as occurring between

[1] Cf. also M. Herskovits' use of the term 'social visibility' in relation to a white anthropologist in Africa, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, 1937, pp. 322-23. My friend E. J. Lindgren has pointed out to me how important it is for the ethnologist to describe his role in a native community and has stressed the very different attitude of the Asiatic peoples of N. China to the visit of a European anthropologist from that of the Africans and Melanesians. *Congrès international des sciences anthropologiques et ethnologiques*, 1934, Section B. Cf. also O. A. Oeser's 'Methods and assumptions in field-work in Social Psychology', *B. Journal of Psychology*, 1937, vol. xxvii.

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128 the various sections of the community I have tried to specify. Sentences given in quotations are actual native texts translated freely, but where some doubtful meaning might occur or an English figure of speech has been used, I have added the translation of the relevant passages in the Bemba tongue. I have used the word 'native' as synonymous with Bemba throughout the book.

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or out of marriage. Anyone who takes this right from him is said to steal or spoil the chisungu.

The actual ceremony I witnessed will now be described.

The presentation of this type of ritual material raises difficulties. The chisungu ceremony I attended in 1931 lasted continuously for over a month. (I was told that in the old days the rites would have spread over six months or more.) During this time I saw over eighteen separate ceremonies in the initiation hut and surrounding bush; each of these can be split into a number of simpler ritual acts the symbolism of which was as obscure to some of the observers as it was to me. Over forty different pottery emblems were made and handled during the ceremony and a number of others have come to my notice since that date. The walls of the hut were painted with nine different designs on the occasion in question.[1] I recorded over fifty special chisungu songs during the rite and I should estimate that those I was able to take down formed a little over half the total sung.

The rites include dramatic episodes which could not fail to strike the imagination of any onlooker, but these were interspersed with days and nights of incessant dancing, which were wearying even to watch. They are likely to be even more tedious to read about.

It would, of course, be possible to make the material more readable by rigid selection, and the Bemba themselves eliminate detail in the most ruthless fashion when providing outline accounts of the chisungu to European enquirers. (See page 135.) But if an account of a series of rites is to be given at all, it must surely be complete. Omission merely reflects the anthropologist's own threshold of boredom. Puberty ritual is of interest to different types of scientists. There is, for instance, no full account of the nubility ceremonial from this area and, to the ethnologist interested in mapping out the affinities of different cultural groups of the area, the presence or absence of a particular detail of ritual may be of the utmost significance.

The psychologist studying symbolic behaviour, or the linguist interested in the ritual use of language, needs to know the whole system of symbols used if he is to draw deductions from the material. I have, therefore, given all the song and mime data I

[1] Vernon Brelsford has published line drawings of sixteen others, cf. 'Some reflections on Bemba geometric art', *Bantu Studies*, vol. XI, 1937.

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881 have. Moreover, I have thought it necessary to add to the straight-
128 forward description an eye-witness account of the behaviour of the people concerned. How did the people look, dance and speak? Which parts of the ceremony seemed to fill them with fear, excitement, boredom or a feeling of awe? What were the comments made and the views held? This is an addition to detail already wearisomely full, but I believe it adds rather than subtracts from its interest. In spite of the mass of literature on primitive ritual that exists, it is extraordinary how few of the accounts we have give a clear idea of the feeling-tone of the actors engaged. This places a duty on those who have had the fortune to witness a long ceremony to record their impressions of it fully. Without such detail, it is impossible to study the function of a ceremony in a particular culture or of ritual as a whole.

I have endeavoured to lighten the reading by page headings. These should make it possible for the reader to pick out elements of particular interest and to separate the eye-witness account of the ceremony from the interpretation. I have also relegated the chisungu songs to an appendix at the end of the book.

THE ACTORS IN THE CEREMONY

881 *The owner of the ceremony* (*mwine*). Plans for a chisungu ceremony are initiated by the parents of a single girl or by two or three sets of parents whose daughters reach puberty at roughly the same time. These parents provide beer and food for the ceremony with the aid of the parents of the girls' betrothed. The father and mother of the girl engage a mistress of the ceremonies (*nacimbusa*) to organize the rite. In the old days they had to provide bark-cloth for her payment. Nowadays she seems to receive between five and ten shillings as well as an additional present from the bridegroom. This formerly consisted of a bark-cloth but is now more often a blanket or a few shillings.

881 The man or woman who provides for a ceremony is known as
554 the owner or *mwine*. The owner is not necessarily a parent. A chief will commonly provide for the chisungu of a young wife betrothed to him before puberty, or for his maternal nieces or sisters. Men of rank will also provide for ceremonies carried out for their sisters,

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girls in question, and I had little time to get subsequent comment from other sections of the community such as the men of the village as distinct from the women, or from one or two of the Christians living in the neighbourhood. A striking gap in my material is the absence of any comments made by the girls themselves. This is, I think, significant. These girls, who are obliged to remain silent, often covered with blankets, seem to lose all personality for the observer as the rites follow one after the other. They are both the centres of the ceremony, and yet the least interesting of the actors in it. However, I consider my failure to arrange for longer conversations and more intimate contacts with the two girls to have been a serious omission. It leaves an element of uncertainty in my interpretation of the educational function of the rites.

In the following account, I try to give a straightforward description of what I actually saw and heard with comments made by informants during the ceremony or in answer to questions afterwards. I was able to check up much of the data during a visit to other areas in 1933–4, and with specialist students of Cibemba, Paul Mushindo, A. Chileshye, I. A. Nkonde and Kasonde.

Comments made to me during the course of the rites are given in brackets. Unless otherwise stated, the comments were made by any woman present. Interpretations made subsequently, either by one of the *nacimbusas* or by one of these Bemba experts are given in footnotes.[1] N.G. stands for Nangoshye, P.B.M. for Paul Mushindo and A.C. for A. Chileshye.

FIRST DAY

The blessing of the girls (*ukupala amate*)

The first rite of the ceremony took place on May 31st. I was told that the headman of the village called the blessing of his ancestral spirits in the early morning. This he did by spitting into the air and calling on the names of his ancestors. I did not see this rite but it is the common Bemba practice in ceremonies of the kind.

The entry into the hut (*ukuingishya abanacisungu*)

At about four in the afternoon, the village drums began to go with the characteristic chisungu rhythm. I was called to the hut

[1] A free translation of songs is given. The full interpretation follows in Appendix B. The song numbers refer to this appendix.

Preface.

Since I completed this paper Chitimukulu Kanyanta has died, in August, 1943. At least a year will pass after the death before a successor begins to inherit, and, as Mwamba too has been dangerously ill for some time, it is likely that there will be great changes of personnel throughout the main lines of Bemba chieftainships within the next year or so. The inheritance of a big chieftainship sometimes takes as long as two years. This gives ample time for the resolving of any personal or tribal disputes and some are sure to occur. The claims of the third branch of the clan will, on this occasion, cause some debate.

The fact that Kanyanta has died does not affect the discussions in this paper. For it is the principles and the precedents of succession that I have tried to emphasise, and the usefulness of this work will extend, I hope, far beyond the deaths of existing chiefs. Much has been written about the Bemba but no full and thorough study of the succession of chiefs has yet been published. But the tribe is the largest in Northern Rhodesia and the typical movement of chiefs from one district to another on succession is a factor that affects the work of officials of many departments. So that though the subject may make dull reading its importance to Government justifies a detailed study.

It is necessary to say something of the attached genealogical table. The table compiled by the late E. H. B. Goodall was prepared in 1910–12. It is a thorough piece of work but it is eleven feet long and thus unsuitable for reproduction in this paper. A smaller edition was prepared during the Willis enquiry in 1924. The table I give here is adapted from this latter one with amendments to bring it up to date. It deals only with the present lineage. District Note Books and works by Missionaries contain many long lists of Chitimukulus but no one list agrees with another about the number of Paramounts that have reigned since the dim past. Since this is a modern discussion and not a historical study the restriction of the table to the verified and known chiefs of the present lineage is adequate. The Paramount just deceased was thus Chitimukulu VIII of the present lineage, though some writers would make him the thirty-second of present and traditional history.

The letter and figure following each proper name in this paper are given for ease of reference to the corresponding line and place in the genealogical table.

I am most grateful for the help and comments of Father Etienne of the White Fathers Missions. He is an expert of many years standing on the Bemba and his assistance has been invaluable to me in clarifying the principles of succession.

I must also thank Dr. Max Gluckman, the Director of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute for important criticisms and suggestions on the earlier draft of this paper.

W. V. Brelsford,
District Officer.

Luwingu,
March, 1944.